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From a painting by G. A. Reid

A MODERN MADONNA

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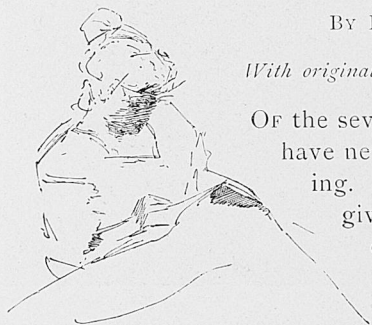
No. 12

"We make no choice among the varied paths where art and letters seek for truth."

BOYHOOD AND GIRLHOOD

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN

With original illustrations by G. A. Reid, R.C.A.



WRITING

OF the seven ages of man which Shakespeare distinguished, I have never ceased to regard boyhood as the most interesting. I suppose gallantry ought to have prompted me to give the preference to girlhood, and so it would at a certain period of my existence, which now is past. Both the girl and the boy begin life in a semi-vegetable condition. Even long after they have escaped from their mothers' arms, and been sur-



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE QUESTION



THE CLOCK-CLEANER

rendered to the problematic guidance of nurses, they walk about in a dim stupor, and it is only gradually that they awake to the charm of the world in which their lot is cast.

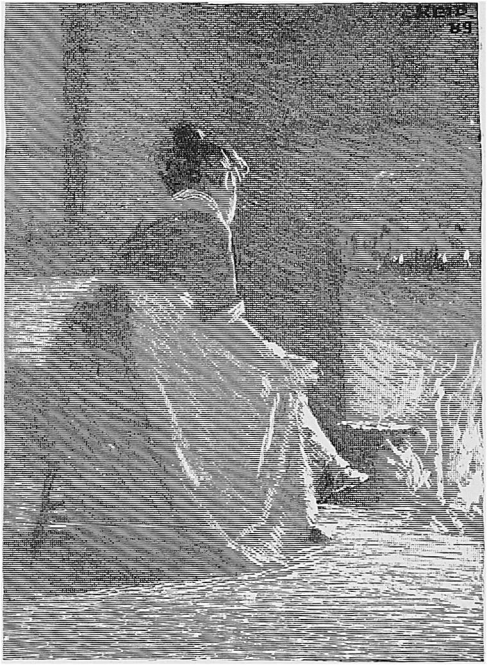
This is the restless period of early childhood when the boy is only vaguely differentiated by his knickerbockers from his sister, when he plays indiscriminately



A STORY IN THE HAY-LOFT

and without regard for his dignity, with any little maid who will consent to be his horse or assist him in damming up the gutter. This is the innocent age of mud-pies, when the boy and the girl kiss each other without offence, in making up quarrels, and are kissed by the friendly visitor without thought of resentment.

But gradually there steals into the soul of each a sense of difference. The *bonne camaraderie* of the pinafore period becomes to the boy something dimly disgraceful—something to be ashamed of—and, if yet surreptitiously indulged in, to be scrupulously hidden from other boys. It is only on extraordinary occasions, when some startling phenomenon, such as the arrival of the carpenter with his tools, or the plumber or the clock-cleaner, overpowers and silences all lesser emotions—it is only then that the lad forgets his masculinity and is content to elbow his sister in eager contemplation of the artisan's fascinating performance.



A SKETCH FOR "DREAMING"

The age from twelve to sixteen is peculiarly the heroic-barbarous period in the life of the boy. All the early savagery of the race is then apt to crop out. It is then that the adventurous blood of his forefathers begins to stir in his veins, and he dreams of buccaneering, marooning, and fabulous treasure-troves. He lies awake at night, tortured with envy of Robinson Crusoe. To be devoting his precious



THE LOGGERS

time to lessons and schoolmasters, when he might be wrecked on desert isles, and be thrilled to his marrow by the foot-prints of cannibals, seems altogether preposterous. To be perspiring over algebraic problems and Latin verbs, when he might go swaggering on a quarter-deck, swinging a cutlass, seems absurdly tame and inglorious.

It is at such times, when the actual routine of life, under the senseless compulsion of elders, presents such a cruel contrast to all that the heroic boy-soul is hungering for—it is at such times, I say, that the adventurous lads hold secret rendezvous in the hay-loft and harrow each other with gruesome tales of battle, murder, and sudden death. I know nothing more enviable than the utterly self-oblivious enchantment of the listeners, as they swallow greedily every preposterous detail of the gory plot.

During the years when the girl's fancy roams in flowery meads, among daisies and marigolds, making an occasional shy and guilty excursion toward the forbidden land of love, the boy holds all such stuff (and the girl included) to be beneath contempt, and he would pity himself as a milksop and a molycoddle if he could extract entertainment from such effeminate pursuits as picking flowers or berries or practising on the piano.

It is evident that Mr. Reid has perceived these characteristics in boys and girls and embodied them in his paintings. He is a Canadian, but has studied in Philadelphia and New York, and in Europe, and so has had an opportunity to study young human nature in a great variety of climes and aspects. With that sym-



AMONG THE DAISIES



A SONATA



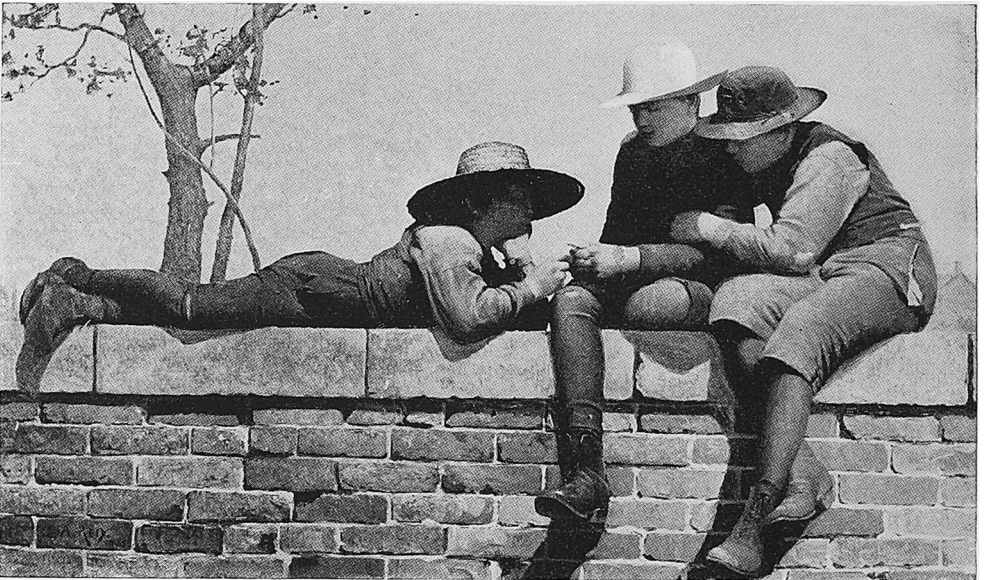
THE YOUNG BERRY-PICKERS

thetic realism which has characterized his pictures of more adult persons, he has given us here the boy and the girl which we know, and which we were, and it does us good to have those days so recalled.

I remember in my own boyhood being paid twelve cents an hour for condescending to bear a part (a very modest one) in a weekly musical performance in my grandfather's house; I only consented because of the financial consideration. The constant supply of pocket-money which I could secure by practising seemed, on the whole, a fair indemnity for my sacrifice of dignity. But I took good care not to let my friends know by what degrading toil I acquired such enviable wealth, which, by the way, I freely placed at their disposal. And after an earnest deliberation in the barn, we resolved to buy

twenty-four clay pipes (because there was nothing else of which you could obtain so large a return for the money). How vividly do I recall the exultation, the royal munificence, with which I distributed those twenty-four clay pipes, and alas, even more vividly do I recall the deadly misery which seized us all when we had put them to their legitimate use.

Among the reminiscences of my boyhood, none is invested with a higher zest



DRAWING LOTS



A STUDY OF CURVES



A STUDY IN LEAD-PENCIL

than my visits to the lumbermen's camp. To see some huge giant of the mountains fall with a mighty crash, splintering its weaker neighbors into kindling wood, possessed a fascination that never grew stale. Then the pungent smell of the rosin, the frozen ground strewn with clean chips, the sharp sound of the axe re-echoing from the rocks, the faint elfin notes which would come floating from nowhere to nowhere, all this set my blood agog with strange, uncomprehended sensations. Possibly also the hint of peril which never was absent from the lumberman's tasks, and the blood-curdling tales that I heard of loggers crushed or maimed in loading the enormous logs upon the ox-draws, or by tumbling into the cataract in trying to break a log-chain, may have cast a heroic light upon a prosaic occupation.

That boys, as they have an undeniable affinity for the woods (a whiff from the primeval camp-fires lingering, as it were, in their nostrils), have also an aptitude for the failings of primeval man is, I think, capable of demonstration. Of course, I am not speaking of the boy of the Sunday-school story; but of the actual, reckless, shiftless, average boy, who brags of his muscle, feels occasional itchings for a fight, and is not above asserting his

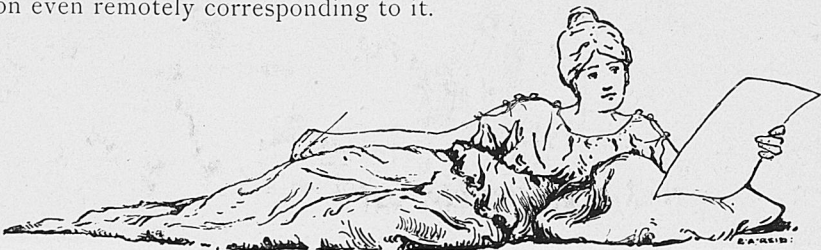
authority by bullying his inferiors. Such boys settle all minor questions, which do not require an appeal to force, by matching pennies or drawing lots. A certain happy-go-lucky bravado, which is inseparable from the gambling instinct, characterizes more or less both the savage and the boy; while the girl, as far as I am aware, has nothing in her composition even remotely corresponding to it.



A STUDY



A LITTLE MAID



"ART"